

recent writers the latter has been used, *Strix funerea* stands first on the page, and as it thus has anteriority, should be adopted in place of *Strix ulula*. The names of the two forms of the species will by this procedure stand as:

*Surnia funerea funerea* (Linnaeus),  
*Surnia funerea caparoch* (Müller).

—Harry C. Oberholser.

#### PIRANGA ERYTHROMELAS VERSUS PIRANGA MEXICANA.

The name *Piranga erythromelas* which has long been used for the scarlet tanager is much antedated by *Loxia mexicana* Linnaeus (Syst. Nat. ed. 10, I, 1758, p. 172), applied undoubtedly to the same bird. Linnaeus (*loc. cit.*) gives the following diagnosis and locality:

“L[oxia] rubra, alis nigris.

*Habitat in America australi.*”

He gives also a reference to Seba, whose description, though not long, is accurate and perfectly applicable.

This description (Locuplet. rer. natural. thesauri accur. descript. et icon. artific. express., I, 1734, p. 101, t. 65, f. 1) is in full as follows:

“*Avis, mexicana, grandis, rubra; passeris species.*

“*Quae caput, thoracem, & dorsum ejus vestiunt, pennae sanguinei sunt coloris; dum pennae remiges & cauda, prorsus nigricant, rubedine tamen aliquâ supernam partem obtegente.*”

Linnaeus in a later connection (Syst. Nat. ed. 12, I, 1766, p. 300) somewhat amplifies his first account by describing the bird as “*L. rubra, alis caudaque nigris,*” and adding as a synonym the *Coccothraustes mexicana* of Brisson (Ornith. III, 1760, p. 256). Brisson also cites Seba, and furthermore gives a detailed description of his own that in all particulars of color and dimensions agrees almost exactly with the bird now called *Piranga erythromelas*, and with this alone. It might be mentioned that Salvin and Godman long ago announced (Biol. Cent.-Am. Aves, I, 1886, p. 424) this identification of Linnaeus’ *Loxia mexicana*, but for reasons of their own continued to use the name then current for the species—*Pyrranga rubra*. There seems now, however, no reason for rejecting the exclusively pertinent name given by Linnaeus, even though on a subsequent page (Syst. Nat. ed. 10, I, 1758, p. 174) he uses the term *Loxia mexicana* for an entirely different species—undoubtedly *Spiza americana* (Gmelin)! Our present bird should therefore in future be called *Piranga mexicana* (Linnaeus).

—Harry C. Oberholser.

#### THE NAMES OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON AND THE MOURNING DOVE.

To those naturalists who, like the British, use the twelfth edition of Linnaeus (1766) as the starting point of binomial nomenclature, the names of the Passenger Pigeon and the Mourning Dove are clear and offer no complications. Not so, however, to the Americans and others who start

with the tenth edition (1758), for here Linnaeus unquestionably included both birds in the references under his *Columba macroura*.

The A. O. U. committee on nomenclature and American ornithologists generally have of late years used this name for the Mourning Dove, and have called the Passenger Pigeon by the name that first appeared in the twelfth edition—*Columba migratoria* Linn. In my opinion, however, this is hardly correct.

Linnaeus' *Columba macroura* was based on Edwards p. 15, t. 15, and Catesby p. 23, t. 23. Edwards' bird, carefully described and well figured, was of course a Mourning Dove, but it came from the West Indies, and Edwards tells us, "The Figure of this Bird shews it of its natural Bigness." Measuring the various parts and comparing the results with specimens, I find it altogether too small for the continental form of the Mourning Dove, and to agree very well with the small form of Cuba (and other islands of the Greater Antilles?) which has lately been named *Zenaidura macroura bella* by Palmer and Riley. The reference to Catesby applies wholly to the Passenger Pigeon and the plate shows a fine adult male.

Now as all Linnaeus' references were given chronologically it matters not which came first, and the important question is from which of these two distinct species, confused under one name, did Linnaeus take his brief diagnosis and his "Habitat." In this instance it is plain. Linnaeus' diagnosis reads "pectore purpurascens," and he also says "Habitat, in Canada: hybernat in Carolina," both directly from Catesby, and neither having anything whatever to do with Edwards.

In the twelfth edition Linnaeus dropped *Columba macroura*, called the Passenger Pigeon *Columba migratoria*, the Carolina Mourning Dove *Columba carolinensis*, and named the bird of Edwards' plate No. 15 *Columba marginata*.

It is therefore my opinion that we who stand by the tenth edition must arrange the names of these Columbæ as follows:

**Ectopistes macrourus** (Linn.)

Passenger Pigeon.

*Columba macroura* Linn., S. N. ed. 10, p. 164, 1758.

**Zenaidura carolinensis carolinensis** (Linn.)

Carolina Mourning Dove.

*Columba carolinensis* Linn., S. N. ed. 12, p. 286, 1766.

**Zenaidura carolinensis marginata** (Linn.)\*

West Indian Mourning Dove.

*Columba marginata* Linn., S. N. ed. 12, p. 286, 1766.

—Outram Bangs.

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\* As to this latter name's supplanting *Zenaidura carolinensis bella* (Palmer and Riley) I can not help feeling regret that a good modern name founded on a bird from a definite region should give way to an old one without definite type locality. But I can see no help for it. Edwards distinctly says his bird was from the West Indies, and figures a very small example, and as the small size of the Cuban Mourning Dove is about its only distinctive character, I am afraid the *Columba marginata* Linn. must be the name by which it shall be known.